Root Cause Investigation (RCI) Best Practices Guide Product Overview

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Roland Duphily
Acquisition Risk and Reliability Engineering Department
Systems Engineering Division

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National Reconnaissance Office
14675 Lee Road
Chantilly, VA 20151-1715

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Acknowledgments (Cont)

The Topic Team would like to acknowledge the contributions and feedback from the following subject matter experts (SMEs) who reviewed the document:

Lane Saechao	Aerojet Rocketdyne
Tom Hecht	Aerospace
Matthew Eby	Aerospace
Richard Pfisterer	APL
David Eckhardt	BAE Systems
Mary D'Odine	Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp
Gerald Schumann	NASA
Mark Wroth	Northrop Grumman
Larry DeFillipo	Orbital Sciences Corp
Mauricio Tapia	Orbital Sciences Corp
Deanna Musil	SSL
Matteo Genna	SSL

Root Cause Investigation (RCI)
Best Practices Guide
Overview

Harold Harder, The Boeing Company
Roland Duphily, The Aerospace Corporation

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This presentation provides a summary overview of TOR-2014-02202, "Root Cause Investigation Best Practices Guide", which was produced as part of the 2014 Mission Assurance Improvement Workshop.

RCI Overview Agenda

- Motivation for RCI Guide
- Example
- Product Overview
- Topic Details
- Product Implementation Recommendations
- Topic Follow-on Recommendations
- Team Membership and Recognition

Motivation for RCI Guide
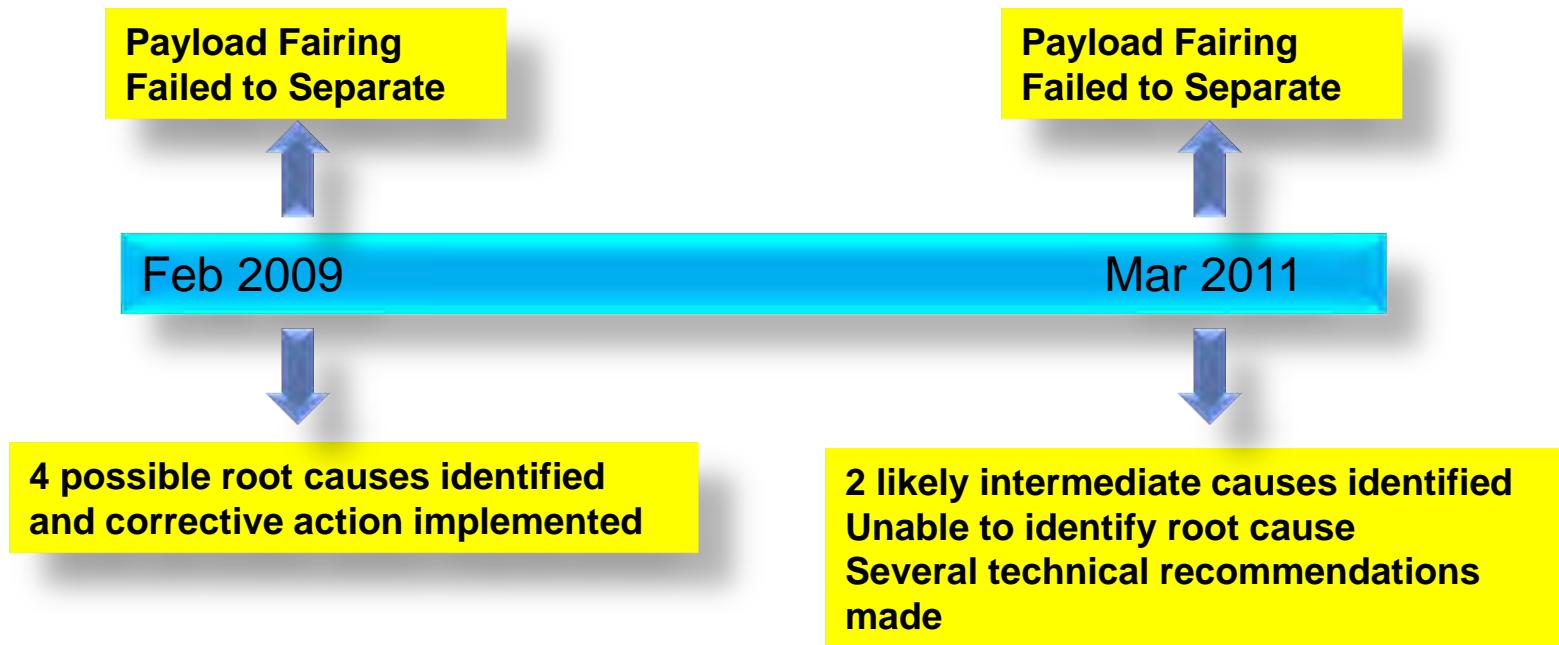
- Some root cause failure investigations failed to identify true root cause
  - *Unfortunately, failure recurred after corrective actions were implemented for what was believed to be the root cause*
- Projects and teams may lack leadership and guidance documents on performance of root cause analysis (RCA)
- Variability in RCA techniques used can result in ineffective or inefficient root cause investigations
- For the National Security Space community, no recognized RCI best practice exists

Summary

- This guide has been prepared to help determine what methods and software tools are available when significant detailed root cause investigations are needed and what level of rigor is appropriate to reduce the likelihood of missing true root causes identification. For this report a root cause is the ultimate cause or causes that if eliminated would have prevented the occurrence of the failure. In reality, many failures require only one or two investigators to identify root causes and do not demand an investigation plan that includes many of the practices defined in this document.

- During ground testing and on-orbit operations of space systems, programs have experienced anomalies and failures where investigations did not truly establish definitive root causes. This has resulted in unidentified residual risk for future missions

Notional Failure Recurrence Example

Payload Fairing Failed to Separate

Payload Fairing Failed to Separate

Feb 2009   Mar 2011

4 possible root causes identified and corrective action implemented

2 likely intermediate causes identified Unable to identify root cause Several technical recommendations made

Failure to Identify True Root Cause Increases Mission Risk

Goal of RCI Best Practices Guide is to Improve Identification of True Root Causes and Minimize Mission Risk

RCI Topic Team Charter

- Establish a cross industry and government team to formulate foundational information and recommended best practices for Root Cause Investigations (RCI) focused on the space industry

Root Cause Investigation Purpose and Scope

- During ground testing and on-orbit operations of space systems, programs have experienced anomalies and failures where investigations did not truly establish definitive root causes. This has resulted in unidentified residual risk for future missions

- Guide focuses on RCA elements of the broader Root Cause Corrective Action (RCCA) process per request of the Steering Committee. Corrective action process is not discussed in this guide.
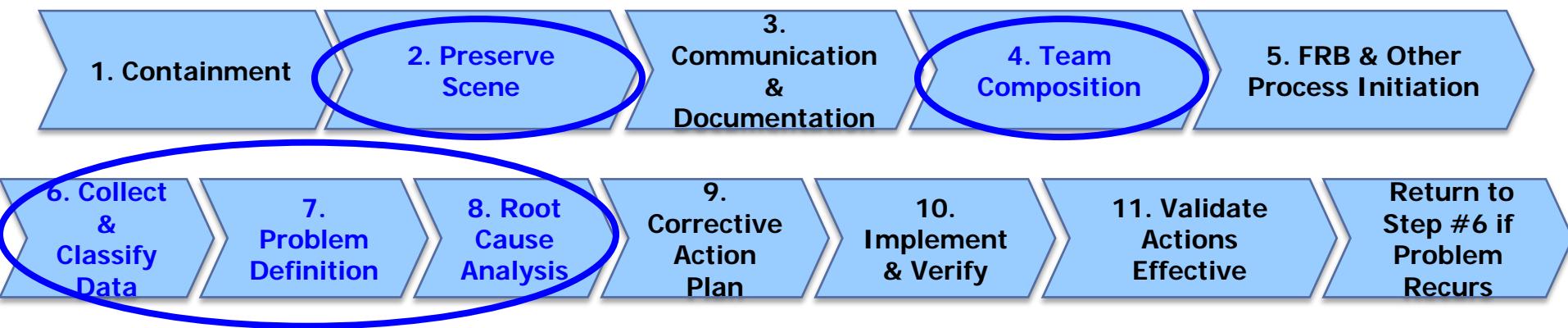
Root Cause Investigation Guide
Traceability to Steering Committee

Deliverable Requested	Location in RCI Guide
Overview of basis for RCAs, definitions and terminology, commonly used techniques, needed skills/experience	Sec 2, Sec 3, Sec 8, Sec 5.3
Key early actions to take following anomaly/failure	Sec 5.0
Data/information collection approaches	Sec 6.0
Structured RCA approaches – pros/cons	Sec 8, Table 11
Survey/review of available RCA tools	Sec 9.0
Guidance on criteria for determining when a RCA is sufficient (when do you stop)	Sec 10.0
RCA of on orbit vs. on ground anomalies	Sec 11.0
Handling of root cause unknown and unverified failures	Sec 12.0

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Root Cause Investigation Best Practices Guide

Key Early Actions following the failure/anomaly are included in the top chevron bar, and the balance of the RCCA process is included in the bottom chevron bar. Note that this document only addresses those actions that significantly affect the **Root Cause Analysis** step (noted in **bold blue**):

1. Containment	2. Preserve Scene	3. Communication & Documentation	4. Team Composition	5. FRB & Other Process Initiation

6. Collect & Classify Data	7. Problem Definition	8. Root Cause Analysis	9. Corrective Action Plan	10. Implement & Verify	11. Validate Actions Effective	Return to Step #6 if Problem Recurs

- Focus is on Root Cause Analysis Methods and Tools utilized by the RCI Space Systems Team and companies
  - *No magic methods or tools; identified common issues and facilitation techniques*
  - *Many ground failure RCI's validate true root cause quickly (hardware available)*
  - *A few complex anomalies benefit from a combination of items in the RCI guide*

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RCI Guide Details

- This Guidance Document summarizes root cause investigation best practice recommendations and key takeaways for use with simple or complex on-ground or in-orbit failures and anomalies.

- The industry Core Team focused on combining most effective root cause investigation approaches from each company in a usable format.

- Provide Pro and Cons for RCA Methods and RCA Pitfalls.

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RCI Guide Details- Cont

- **Preservation of the "scene" of the failure:** Don't contaminate evidence (by immediately reworking affected unit to restore operation if it would affect failure investigation)

- **Immediate Data Collection:** Interviews, observations, measurements, audio/video, chart recordings, all relevant data, etc.

- **Determine Team Composition (as appropriate):** Ideally include 6-8 people including Process Performers (operators, technicians, etc.), Subject Matter Experts (engineers, scientists, etc.), Customer or Rep (Quality, Mission Assurance, etc.), RCCA Facilitator, Team Leader/Chair; define roles (RACI – Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed and/or RAA – Responsibility, Accountability, Authority)

RCI Guide Details - Cont

- **Problem Definition ("Problem Definition Worksheet"):** Define, understand and agree upon the facts surrounding the anomaly: Title, Customer, What happened (be specific)?, When did it happen (start date/time – stop date/time)?, Where did it happen (be specific)?, How often did it happen?, Was it repeatable under specific conditions?, Importance/Significance?, Avoid "Who" (may inhibit cooperation if people think they are being blamed), Avoid "Why" and "How" (RCCA process will determine this)

- **Brainstorm potential causes/contributing factors including use of Data Collection above:** Classify data utilizing KNOT Chart, may also use Affinity Diagram, Pareto or Scatter Chart, Histogram, or other tools; assign actions, ECD's, etc

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RCI Guide Details - Cont

- **Root Cause Analysis (RCA):** Almost always more than one root cause, and the level of rigor is determined by complexity of problem. Consider "Severity/Recurrence Risk Cube" analysis for RCA approach

  - *RCA Techniques (may use one or more): Timeline, 5-Whys, Apollo, Fishbone (Ishikawa) Cause and Effect Diagram, Process Analysis or Process Classification Method including Process Mapping or Logic Flow Pert Chart , Advanced Cause and Effect Analysis (complex Cause/Effect relationships in Fault/Failure Tree format), RCA "Stacking" (apply multiple techniques) or Interaction of methods (i.e., Fishbone diagram followed by 5-Why's on the identified RC from the Fishbone)*

  - *Special Considerations for Space RCA: Low volume, high value assets vs. serial production situations, Pre-launch vs. on-orbit investigations, Managing schedule pressures and team technical independence*

  - *Unverified Failures (UVF): What to do when root causes cannot be determined (in this context the UVF discussion is often about "how far do you go in looking for root cause?")*

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RCI Outline – 2 of 3

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RCI Outline – 3 of 3

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Reasons For Missing True Root Cause

- Incorrect team composition

- Incorrect data classification

- Lack of objectivity/incorrect problem definition

- Cost and schedule constraints

- Rush to judgment

- Lack of management commitment

Details on RCA Pitfalls Covered in Exec Overview and Section 13

Team Facilitation Techniques

- Knowledge of group dynamics

  - *Ability to "read" the team (confusion, progress, intimidation)*

  - *Ability to create a safe environment*

  - *Ability to deal with disruptions and intimidation*

- Ability to determine if team is diverse enough

- Approach the problem from both right brain creative and left brain logical perspectives

- Classify data accurately (KNOT)

- Use RCA tool with which the team is most comfortable

- FOLLOW THE PROCESS (deviation introduces risk)

RCA Level Based on Risk Matrix

	Low	Medium	High
High	Level 3 RCA	Level 4 RCA	Highest Risk Items Level 5 RCA
Medium	Level 2 RCA	Level 3 RCA	Level 4 RCA
Low	Lowest Risk Items Level 1 RCA	Level 2 RCA	Level 3 RCA

Severity < (Significance of Impact) >

Recurrence

< Likelihood of the Event Recurring >

Failure Risk Matrix used to Determine RCA Rigor Needed

RCA Level by Impact Matrix

RCA Level	Impact	Commonly used Data Collection & RCA Methods	Typical Analysis Span	Output Artifacts (as required)
5	High-High	• KNOT Chart • Event Timeline • Process Mapping • Cause Mapping • Fishbone Diagram • Advanced Cause & Effect Analysis • Fault Tree Analysis	2 – 6 Weeks (or longer)	• RCA Findings and Conclusions • Validation and Measurement Strategy • Illustration of Root Cause Analysis • Company wide communications
4	High-Medium Medium-High	• KNOT Chart • Event Timeline • Process Mapping • Cause Mapping • Fishbone Diagram • Advanced Cause & Effect Analysis	4 days – 2 Weeks	• RCA Findings and Conclusions • Validation and Measurement Strategy • Illustration of Root Cause Analysis • User Community communications
3	High-Low Medium-Medium Low-High	• Brainstorming • Event Timeline • Cause Mapping • Fishbone Diagram	1 – 3 days	• RCA Findings and Conclusions • Validation and Measurement Strategy • Illustration of Root Cause Analysis • Affected people communications
2	Low-Medium Medium-Low	• 5 -Whys • Brainstorming • Fishbone Diagram	.5 – 1 day	• RCA Findings and Conclusions • Affected people communications
1	Low-Low	• 5 -Whys • Brainstorming	1 – 4 hours	• RCA Findings and Conclusions • Affected people communications

Impact Matrix Provides Guidance on Applicable RCA Methods

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Intended RCI Guide Use

- **Primary use**
  - *Guide for RCI teams and sponsors on space related investigations*
  - *Help develop effective RCI plan and depth of rigor*

- **Publicize RCI guide at conferences**
  - *International Society of Testing and Failure Analysis (ASM)*
  - *International Reliability Physics Symposium (IEEE)*
  - *Reliability Availability and Maintainability Symposium (RAMS)*
  - *And others*

- **Specific recommendations for industry:**
  - *Incorporate best practices in corporate command media*
  - *Use as a reference to subcontractors to set expectations and improve communications*

- **Specific recommendations for government:**
  - *Use as a reference to contractors to set expectations and improve communications*
  - *Consider using as reference in program offices and RFP's*

RCI Team Introductions

Core Team		Additional SME	
Company	**Participant**	**Company**	**Participant**
The Aerospace Corporation	Ron Duphily Rodney Morehead	The Aerospace Corporation	Tom Hecht Matthew Eby
Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp	Joseph Haman	Orbital	David Adcock Mauricio Tapia Larry Defillipo
The Boeing Company	Harold Harder	Northrop Grumman	Mark Wroth
Lockheed Martin Corporation	Helen Gjerde	Aerojet Rocketdyne	Iane Saechao
Northrop Grumman	Susanne Dubois Thomas Stout	NASA	Gerald Schumann
Orbital	David Ward	BAE Systems	David Eckhardt
Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems	Tom Reinsel	Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp	Mary D'Odine
SSL	Jim Loman Eric Lau		

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Root Cause Investigation (RCI) Best Practices Guide Product Overview

Approved Electronically by:

Jacqueline M. Wyrwitzke, PRINC
DIRECTOR
MISSION ASSURANCE SUBDIVISION
SYSTEMS ENGINEERING DIVISION
ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY
GROUP

Russell E. Averill, GENERAL MANAGER
SPACE BASED SURVEILLANCE
DIVISION
SPACE PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Manuel De Ponte, SR VP NATL SYS
NATIONAL SYSTEMS GROUP

Jackie M. Webb-Larkin, SECURITY
SPECIALIST III
GOVERNMENT SECURITY
SECURITY OPERATIONS
OPERATIONS & SUPPORT GROUP

Root Cause Investigation (RCI) Best Practices Guide Product Overview

Technical Peer Review Performed by:

Jacqueline M. Wyrwitzke, PRINC DIRECTOR
MISSION ASSURANCE SUBDIVISION
SYSTEMS ENGINEERING DIVISION
ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY GROUP

Norman Y. Lao, DIRECTOR DEPT
ACQ RISK & RELIABILITY ENGINEERING DEPT
MISSION ASSURANCE SUBDIVISION
ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY GROUP

External Distribution

Charles Abernethy
Aerojet
charles.abernethy@aerojet.com

David Adcock
Orbital
adcock.david@orbital.com

Aaron Apruzzese
ATK
aaron.apruzzese@atk.com

Carlo Abesamis
NASA
abesamis@jpl.nasa.gov

Robert Adkisson
Boeing
robert.w.adkisson@boeing.com

Chic Arey
NRO
areyc@nro.mil

Andrew Adams
Boeing
andrew.c.adams@boeing.com

Scott Anderson
Seaker
scott.anderson@seaker.com

Brent Armand
Orbital
Armand.Brent@orbital.com

Larry Arnett Loral arnett.larry@ssd.loral.com	Glenn Barney Comdev-USA glenn.barney@comdex-use.com	Robert Bodemuller Ball rbodemuller@ball.com
Ken Baier Lockheed Martin ken.b.baier@lmco.com	David Beckwith NRO beckwith@nro.mil	Silvia Bouchard Northrop Grumman silver.bouchard@ngc.com
Dean Baker NRO bakerdea@nro.mil	Theresa Beech Metispace tbeech@metispace.com	Wayne Brown ULA Launch wayne.brown@ulalaunch.com
Mark Baldwin Raytheon Mark.L.Baldwin@raytheon.com	Barry Birdsong MDA barry.birdsong@mda.mil	Christopher Brust DCMA Christopher.Brust@dcma.mil
Lisa Barboza General Dynamics Lisa.Barboza@gd-ais.com	Ruth Bishop Northrop Grumman ruth.bishop@ngc.com	Alexis Burkevics Rocket Alexis.Burkevics@rocket.com

Thomas Burns
NOAA
thomas.burns@noaa.gov

Will Caven
Loral
caven.will@ssd.loral.com

Jerald Cogen
FREQELEC
Jerald.Cogen@FreqElec.com

Edward Bush
Northrop Grumman
Edward.Bush@ngs.com

Shawn Cheadle
Lockheed Martin
shawn.cheadle@lmco.com

Bernie Collins
DNI
bernie.f.collins@dni.gov

Tim Cahill
Lockheed Martin
tim.cahil@lmco.com

Janica Cheney
ATK
janica.cheney@atk.com

Jeff Conyers
Ball
jconyers@ball.com

Kevin Campbell
Exelis Inc
kevin.campbell@exelisinc.com

Brian Class
Orbital
class.brian@orbital.com

Kevin Crackel
Aerojet
kevin.crackel@aerojet.com

Larry Capots
Lockheed Martin
larry.capots@lmco.com

Brad Clevenger
EMCORE
brad_clevenger@emcore.com

James Creiman
Northrup Grumman
James.Creiman@ngc.com

Stephen Cross
ULA Launch
stephen.d.cross@ulalaunch.com

Jaclyn Decker
Orbital
decker.jaclun@orbital.com

Susanne Dubois
Northrop Grumman
susanne.dubois@ngc.com

Shawn Cullen
JDSU
shawn.cullen@jdsu.com

Larry DeFillipo
Orbital
defillipo.aryy@orbital.com

David Eckhardt
BAE Systems
david.g.eckhardt@baesystems.com

Louis D'Angelo
Lockheed Martin
louis.a.d'angelo@lmco.com

Ken Dodson
SSL MDA
ken.dodson@sslmda.com

Robert Ellsworth
Boeing
robert.h.ellsworth@boeing.com

David Davis
SMC
David.Davis.3@us.af.mil

Tom Donehue
ATK
tom.donehue@atk.com

Matt Fahl
Harris Corporation
mfahl@harris.com

Douglas Dawson
NASA
douglas.e.dawson@jpl.nasa.gov

Mary D'Ordine
Ball
mdordine@ball.com

James Farrell
Boeing
james.t.farrell@boeing.com

Tracy Fiedler
Raytheon
tracy.m.fiedler@raytheon.com

Mike Floyd
General Dynamics
Mike.Floyd@gdc4s.com

Matteo Genna
SSL
matteo.genna@sslmda.com

Brad Fields
Orbital
fields.brad@orbital.com

David Ford
Flextronics
david.ford@flextronics.com

Helen Gjerde
Lockheed Martin
helen.gjerde@lmco.con

Sherri Fike
Ball
sfike@ball.com

Robert Frankievich
Lockheed Martin
robert.h.frankievich@lmco.com

Ricardo Gonzalez
BAE Systems
ricardo.gonzalez@baesystems.com

Richard Fink
NRO
richard.fink@nro.mil

Bill Frazier
Ball
wfrazier@ball.com

Dale Gordon
Rocket
dale.gordon@rocket.com

Bruce Flanick
Northrop Grumman
bruce.flanick@ngc.com

Jace Gardner
Ball
jgardner@ball.com

Chuck Gray
Fescorp
Chuckg@fescorp.com

Luigi Greco Exelis Inc luigi.greco@exelisinc.com	Bob Harr Seaker bob.harr@seaker.com	Paul Hopkins Lockheed Martin paul.c.hopkins@lmco.com
Gregory Hafner Orbital Hafner.Gregory@orbital.com	Frederick Hawthorne Lockheed Martin frederick.d.hawthorne@lmco.com	Kevin Horgan NASA kevin.horgan@nasa.gov
Joe Haman Ball jhaman@ball.com	Ben Hoang Orbital Hoang.Ben@orbital.com	Eugene Jaramillo Raytheon eugenejaramillo@raytheon.com
Lilian Hanna Boeing lilian.hanna@boeing.com	Rosemary Hobart Hobart Machined rosemary@hobartmachined.com	Dan Jarmel Northrop Grumman dan.jarmel@ngc.com
Harold Harder Boeing harold.m.harder@boeing.com	Richard Hodges NASA richard.e.hodges@jpl.nasa.gov	Robert Jennings Raytheon rjennings@raytheon.com

Mike Jensen
ULA Launch
mike.jensen@ulalaunch.com

Mike Kahler
Ball
mkahler@ball.com

Byron Knight
NRO
knightby@nro.mil

Amanda Johnson
Orbital
johnson.amanda@orbital.com

Yehwan Kim
Moog
ykim@moog.com

Hans Koenigsmann
SpaceX
hans.koenigsmann@spacex.com

Edward Jopson
Northrop Grumman
edward.jopson@ngc.com

Jeff Kincaid
Power
Jeffrey.Kincaid@pwr.utc.com

James Koory
Rocket
james.koory@rocket.com

Jim Judd
orbital
judd.jim@orbital.com

Mark King
Micopac
markking@micropac.com

Brian Kosinski
SSL
Kosinski.Brian@ssd.loral.com

Geoffrey Kaczynski
NEA Electronics
gkazynik@neaelectonics.com

Andrew King
Boeing
andrew.m.king@boeing.com

John Kowalchik
Lockheed Martin
john.j.kowalchik@lmco.com

Rick Krause
Ball
rkrause@ball.com

Chris Larocca
EMCORE
clarocca@emcore.com

Don LeRoy
Barden Bearings
dleroy@bardenbearings.com

Steve Krein
ATK
steve.krein@atk.com

Robert Lasky
Orbital
lasky.robert@orbital.com

Scot Lichty
Lockheed Martin
scot.r.lichty@lmco.com

Steve Kuritz
Northrop Grumman
steve.kuritz@ngc.com

Eric Lau
SSL
lau.eric@ssd.loral.com

Sultan Ali Lilani
Integra - Tech
sultan.lilani@integra-tech.com

Louise Ladow
Seaker
louise.ladow@seaker.com

Marvin LeBlanc
NOAA
Marvin.LeBlanc@noaa.gov

Josh Lindley
MDA
joshua.lindley@mda.mil

C J Land
Harris
cland@harris.com

Scott Lee
Northrop Grumman
Scott.lee@ngc.com

Henry Livingston
BAE Systems
henry.c.livingson@baesystems.com

Art Lofton Northrop Grumman Art.Lofton@ngc.com	Joan Lum Boeing joan.l.lum@boeing.com	John Mc Bride Orbital Mcbride.John@orbital.com
James Loman SSL james.loman@sslmda.com	Brian Mack Orbital mack.brian@orbital.com	Ian McDonald BAE Systems ian.a.mcdonald@baesystems.com
Jim Loman SSL loman.james@ssd.loral.com	Julio Malaga Orbital malaga.julio@orbital.com	Kurt Meister Honeywell kurt.meister@honeywell.com
Lester Lopez Harris llopez04@harris.com	Kevin Mallon 1-3 Com Kevin.P.Mallon@1-3com.com	Jeff Mendenhall MIT mendenhall@ll.mit.edu
Frank Lucca 1-3 Com frank.l.lucca@1-3com.com	Miroslav Maramica Area 51 miroslav@area51esq.com	Jo Merritt AVTEC jmerritt@avtec.com

Charles Mills
Lockheed Martin
charles.a.mills@lmco.com

Deanna Musil
SSL
deanna.musil@sslmda.com

Mike Numberger
Navy
nurnberger@nrl.navy.mil

Edmond Mitchell
APL
edmond.mitchell@jhuapl.edu

Thomas Musselman
Boeing
thomas.e.musselman@boeing.com

Michael O'Brien
Exelis Inc
michael.obrien@exelisinc.com

Dennis Mlynarski
Lockheed Martin
dennis.mlynarski@lmco.com

John Nelson
Lockheed Martin
john.d.nelson@lmco.com

Michael Ogneovski
Exelis Inc
michael.ognenovski@exelisinc.com

George Mock
NYE Lubricants
gbm3@nyelubricants.com

Dave Novotney
EBA
dbnovotney@eba-d.com

Debra Olejniczak
Northrop Grumman
Debra.Olejniczak@ngc.com

Nancy Murray
Safety Batteries
Nancy.murray@saftbatteries.com

Ron Nowlin
EaglePicher
ron.nowlin@eaglepicher.com

Larry Ostendorf
psemc
Lostendorf@psemc.com

Anthony Owens Raytheon anthony_owens@raytheon.com	Mark Pazder Moog mpazder@moog.com	Kay Rand Northrop Grumman kay.rand@ngc.com
Joseph Packard Exelis Inc Joseph.packard@exelisinc.com	Steven Pereira APL Steven.Pereira@jhuapl.edu	David Rea BAE Systems david.a.rea@baesystems.com
Peter Pallin SSL peter.pallin@sslmda.com	Richard Pfisterer APL Richard.Pfisterer@jhuapl.edu	Forrest Reed EaglePicher forrest.reed@eaglepicher.com
Richard Patrican Raytheon Richard.A.Patrican@raytheon.com	Angela Phillips Raytheon amphillips@raytheon.com	Thomas Reinsel Raytheon thomas_j_reinsel@raytheon.com
Paulette Megan Orbital paulette.megan@orbital.com	Dave Pinkley Ball dpinkley@ball.com	Bob Ricco Northrop Grumman bob.ricco@ngc.com

Mike Rice
RT Logic
mrice@rtlogic.com

John Rotondo
Boeing
john.l.rotondo@boeing.com

Michael Sampson
NASA
michael.j.sampson@nasa.gov

Sally Richardson
Orbital
richardson.sally@orbital.com

William Rozea
Rocket
william.rozea@rocket.com

Victor Sank
NASA
victor.j.sank@nasa.gov

Troy Rodriquez
Sierra Microwave
troy_rodriquez@sierramicrowave.com

Dennis Rubien
Northrop Grumman
dennis.rubien@ngc.com

Don Sawyer
AVNET
don.sawyer@avnet.com

Ralph Roe
NASA
ralph.r.roe@nasa.gov

Larry Rubin
SSL
Rubin.larry@ssd.loral.com

Fred Schipp
MDA - Navy
frederick.schipp@navy.mil

Mike Roller
UTAS
mike.roller@utas.utc.com

Lane Saechao
Rocket
lane.saechao@rocket.com

Jim Schultz
Boeing
james.w.schultz@boeing.com

Gerald Schumann NASA gerald.d.schumann@nasa.gov	Andrew Shroyer Ball ashroyer@ball.com	Jerry Sobetski Lockheed Martin jerome.f.sobetski@lmco.com
Annie Sennet Safety Batteries Annie.Sennet@saftbarries.com	Fredic Silverman HSTC fsilverman@hstc.com	LaKeisha Souter Northrop Grumman lakeisha.souter@ngc.com
Michael Settember NASA michael.a.settember@jpl.nasa.gov	Rob Singh SSL rob.singh@sslmda.com	Jerry Spindler Execlis Inc Jerry.Spindler@exelisinc.com
Tom Sharpe SMT Corp tsharpe@smtcorp.com	Kevin Sink TTINC kevin.sink@ttinc.com	Peter Stoltz TX Corp pstoltz@txcorp.com
Jonathan Sheffield SSL jonathan.sheffield@sslmda.com	Melanie Sloane Lockheed Martin melanie.sloane@lmco.com	Thomas Stout Northrop Grumman thomas.stout@ngc.com

George Styk
Exelis Inc
george.styk@exelisinc.com

Ghislain Turgeon
SSL
ghislain.turgeon@sslmda.com

Michael Verzuh
Ball
mverzuh@ball.com

David Swanson
Orbital
swanson.david@orbital.com

Deborah Valley
MIT
deborah.valley@ll.mit.edu

John Vilja
Power UTC
jussi.vilja@pwr.utc.com

Mauricio Tapia
Oribital
tapia.mauricio@orbital.com

Fred Van Milligen
JDSU
fvanmilligen@jdsu.com

Vinvent Stefan
Orbital
vincent.stefan@orbital.com

Jeffrey Tate
Raytheon
jeffery_tate@raytheon.com

Marvin VanderWeg
SpaceX
marvin.vanderwag@spacex.com

James Wade
Raytheon
james.w.wade@raytheon.com

Bill Toth
Northrop Grumman
william.toth@ngc.com

Gerrit VanOmmering
SSL
gerrit.vanommering@sslmda.com

John Walker
SSL
JohnF.Walker@sslmda.com

Brian Weir
Booz Allen Hamilton
weir_brian@bah.com

Charlie Whitmeyer
Orbital
whitmeyer.charlie@orbtial.com

George Young
Raytheon
gyoung@raytheon.com

Arthur Weiss
Power UTC
arthur.weiss@pwr.utc.com

Michael Woo
Raytheon
michael.woo@raytheon.com

Craig Wesser
Norhtrop Grumman
craig.wesser@ngc.com

Larry Wray
SSL
wray.larry@ssd.loral.com

Dan White
Comdex-USA
dan.white@comdev-usa.com

Mark Wroth
Northrop Grumman
mark.wroth@ngc.com

Thomas Whitmeyer
NASA
tom.whitmeyer@nasa.gov

Jian Xu
Aeroflex
jian.xu@aeroflex.com

APPROVED BY _~J ın Rojhrgul~_
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